

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 05169 01 OF 02 211744Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
BIB-01 GSA-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-12 MCT-01 IO-13
/091 W

-----073408 211759Z /72

R 211721Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6962
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
KFHMU/AMCONSUL MUNICH 0582
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 05169

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINR, GW, WB
SUBJECT: THE SPD CAUCUS REPRIMANDS KARL-HEINZ HANSEN,
"DISSIDENT" DEPUTY

REF: BONN 3217 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. AFTER FAILING TO PERSUADE BUNDESTAG DEPUTY
HANSEN TO RECALL HIS CHARGES THAT THE FRG IS SEEKING
TO PROTECT FORMER NAZIS, THE SPD BUNDESTAG CAUCUS
PUBLICLY REBUKED HIM. THIS STEP, UNIQUE IN BUNDESTAG
HISTORY, WILL NOT IMPAIR HANSEN'S STANDING AS A DEPUTY.
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PAGE 02 BONN 05169 01 OF 02 211744Z

IT MAY, HOWEVER, INCREASE TENSIONS ALREADY PRESENT IN
THE SPD CAUCUS AND THUS FURTHER IMPAIR THE SCHMIDT GOVERN-
MENT'S ABILITY TO GET ITS WAY IN THE BUNDESTAG. END
SUMMARY.

1. WE REPORTED EARLIER (REF) SOME CHARGES BY SPD BUNDES-
TAG DEPUTY KARL-HEINZ HANSEN, MADE IN A BBC TELECAST ON

FEBRUARY 20 AND REPEATED IN AN AP INTERVIEW ON FEBRUARY 21, THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS NOT INTERESTED IN TAKING OVER THE USG-ADMINISTERED BERLIN DOCUMENT CENTER BECAUSE IT WANTS TO "PROTECT FORMER NAZIS" WHO ARE STILL IN PUBLIC LIFE. THESE STATEMENTS HAVE RAISED HACKLES IN MANY SPD QUARTERS, BECAUSE OF BOTH THEIR CONTENT AND HANSEN'S EARLIER HISTORY OF DEFYING HIS PARTY ON KEY BUNDESTAG VOTES.

2. SINCE ENTERING THE BUNDESTAG IN 1969, HANSEN HAS BEEN A LONER, AN UNCOMFORTABLE AND LARGELY UNPOPULAR MEMBER OF THE SPD CAUCUS (FRAKTION). HIS INDEPENDENT VOTING HABITS HAVE BECOME A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT C THIS LEGISLATIVE PERIOD, GIVEN THE COALITION'S NARROW CONTROL OF THE BUNDESTAG--I.E., 253 VOTES, OR FOUR MORE THAN THE ABSOLUTE MAJORITY WHICH IS NEEDED, INTER ALIA, TO OVERRIDE OBJECTIONS POSED BY THE OPPOSITION-CONTROLLED BUNDESRAT. HANSEN HAS BECOME WELL-KNOWN AS ONE OF THE HARD-CORE "DISSIDENTS" IN HIS FRAKTION.

3. ON MARCH 7, THE SPD FRAKTION DEBATED HANSEN'S CHARGES IN A THREE-HOUR, OFTEN STORMY MEETING. ALL EFFORTS--BY SPD NATIONAL CHAIRMAN WILLY BRANDT, CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT, CAUCUS LEADER HERBERT WEHNER, AND MANY OTHERS--FAILED TO MOVE HANSEN TO RECAT. FINALLY, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BONN 05169 01 OF 02 211744Z

THE FRAKTION TOOK A STEP WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS UNIQUE IN BUNDESTAG HISTORY: IT ISSUED A PUBLIC REBUKE TO HANSEN. THE DEPUTIES APPROVED THIS MEASURE OVERWHELMINGLY: FIVE VOTED AGAINST AND SIX ABSTAINED. (ONLY MANFRED COPPIK, ANOTHER HARD-CORE "DISSIDENT," SPOKE IN HANSEN'S DEFENSE.) THE FRAKTION SPOKESMAN (TERJUNG) LATER CLAIMED THAT MOST OF THOSE VOTING NO OR ABSTAINING DID NOT SUPPORT HANSEN'S CHARGES AGAINST THE FRG BUT REGARDED A FORMAL REPRIMAND AS UNWARRANTED.

4. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MARCH 7 MEETING, THE SPD CAUCUS RELEASED A STATEMENT WHICH (A) NOTED THAT THERE ARE JUSTIFIED DOUBTS AS TO WHETHER, SINCE 1945, DEBATE ON NAZI ATROCITIES HAS ALWAYS BEEN ADEQUATE, (B) POINTEDLY REJECTED HANSEN'S INSINUATIONS AGAINST THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION, AND (C) EMPHATICALLY DISAPPROVED HIS STATEMENT THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WISHES TO PROTECT FORMER NAZIS. NEITHER HANSEN NOR THE SPD HAS SINCE PURSUED THIS SUBJECT IN PUBLIC.

5. COMMENT. THE MARCH 7 DEBATE ENABLED MANY SPD DEPUTIS, NOT JUST THOSE IN THE CONSERVATIVE "SEWER

WORKERS" WING, TO VENT A HOSTILITY AGAINST HANSEN WHICH HAS BEEN GATHERING FOR MONTHS DUE TO HIS STIFF-NECKED REFUSAL TO SUPPORT HIS PARTY--E.G., IN VOTES ON TAX REFORM AND ANTI-TERRORISM MEASURES. HOWEVER, THERE IS SOME RISK THAT THIS DEBATE MAY DEEPEN RIFTS ALREADY PRESENT IN THE FRAKTION.

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PAGE 01 BONN 05169 02 OF 02 211734Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 05169

6. THE 11 DEPUTIES WHO DID NOT ENDORSE THE REPRIMAND AGAINST HANSEN THEREBY REJECTED A UNANIMOUS RECOMMENDATION FROM THEIR LEADERS. THESE DEPUTIES REPORTEDLY INCLUDE MOST OF THE KNOWN AND POTENTIAL "DISSIDENTS" IN THE SPD CAUCUS. THE OPERATIONAL TASK FOR THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT IS STILL TO PREVENT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF

THESE "11" FROM JOINING HANSEN AND COPPIK IN OPPOSING
MAJOR BILLS ENDORSED BY THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION.
GIVEN THE ARITHMETIC IN THE BUNDESTAG, AND THE LIKELI-
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PAGE 02 BONN 05169 02 OF 02 211734Z

HOOD THAT THE OPPOSITION WILL SEEK TO EMBARRASS THE
COALITION AT EVERY TURN, THIS TASK IS INDEED FORMIDABLE.
THE HANSEN DEBATE MAY HAVE MADE IT MORE SO.

7. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, THE MARCH 7 REPRIMAND DOES
NOT PREJUDICE HANSEN'S STANDING IN THE BUNDESTAG. EVEN
IF THE SPD WERE TO EXPEL HIM FROM THE PARTY AND FROM THE
FRAKTION, HE WOULD STILL RETAIN HIS BUNDESTAG SEAT FOR
THE DURATION OF THIS LEGISLATIVE PERIOD--I.E., UNTIL
1980. WE DOUBT THAT THE PARTY WILL RESORT TO SUCH
EXTREME MEASURES AGAINST HANSEN UNLESS HE GIVES IT NEW
AND COMPELLING PROVOCATION. THE SPD DOES NOT WANT TO
MARTYR HANSEN FOR ANY CAUSE, LEST HE GAIN MORE SUPPORT
AND THEREBY FURTHER PREJUDICE THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION.
FOR HIS PART, HANSEN WILL LIKELY WISH TO REMAIN A STORMY
PETREL IN HIS PARTY RATHER THAN TO BECOME A MARTYR OUT-
SIDE IT. END COMMENT.
STOESSEL

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